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LABOR.

BY MRS. FRANCES S. OSGOOD.

Pause not to dream of the future before us:
Pause not to weep the wild cares that come o'er us;
Hark, how Creation's deep, musical chorus
Unintermitting, goes up into Heaven!
Never the ocean-wave falters in flowing
Never the little seed stops in its growing;
More and more richly the Rose-heart keeps glowing,
Tell from its nourishing stem it is riven.

"Labor is worship!"—the robin is singing:
"Labor is worship!"—the wild bee is ringing:
Listen! that eloquent whisper upspringing
Speaks to thy soul from out nature's great heart.
From the dark cloud flows the life-giving shower;
From the rough sod blows the soft breathing flower;
From the small insect, the rich coral bower;
Only man, in the plan, shrinks from his part.

Labor is life!—'Tis the still water faileth;
Idleness ever despaireth, bewaileth;
Keep the watch wound, for the dark rust assaileth!
Flowers droop and die in the stillness of noon.
Labor is glory!—the flying cloud lightens;
Only the waving wing changes and brightens;
Idle hearts only the dark future frightens:
Play the sweet keys, wouldst thou keep them in tune!

Labor is rest—from the sorrows that greet us;
Rest from all petty vexations that meet us,
Rest from sin promptings that ever entreat us,
Rest from world-syrens that lure us to ill.
Work—and pure slumbers shall wait on thy pillow.
Work—thou shalt ride over Care's coming billow;
Lie not down wearied 'neath Wo's weeping willow!
Work with a stout heart and resolute will!

Droop not tho' shame, sin and anguish are round thee!
Bravely fling off the cold chain that hath bound thee!
Look to you pure Heaven smiling beyond thee!
Rest not content in thy darkness—a clod!
Work—for some good,—be it ever so slowly!
Cherish some flower,—be it ever so lowly!
Labor! All labor is noble and holy:—
Let thy great deeds be thy prayer to thy God!

THE GOLDMAKER'S VILLAGE.

This simple story is a translation from "Das Goldmacher-Dorf," of Heinrich Zschokke, at present a popular writer in Germany, whose pen is devoted to a cause which we have espoused—the improvement of the humbler classes of society. The story is slightly abridged; and to adapt it to the apprehension, as well as to excite the sympathies of English readers, some of the descriptions and sentiments have been necessarily altered or modified. In other respects the child-like simplicity of the original remains. It is not the design of the publishers of this Magazine to make it a *tale bearer*, yet "The Goldmaker's village" is so good, and withal founded on actual occurrences, that we have been induced to give it to our readers. It will be concluded in our next number. We believe it may be read by all classes with much profit and pleasure.—*Fam. Mag.*

I.

Oswald returns from the wars to his native village—the miller tells his story.

One fine summer afternoon, a good many years ago, the out-door loiterers of Goldenthal, who were listlessly spending their time beneath the shade of the bushy lime trees which overhung the village street, had their attention drawn to a stranger who was making his way towards them. Tall, well-made, and dressed in a gray coat, with a knapsack on his back and a sword at his side, he was evidently no ordinary wanderer. He looked so formidable with a large scar on his brow, and a black moustache under his nose, that the children shrunk aside from him as he passed up the village. The shout which some of them raised, brought several old women to the doors, and these soon recognized the stranger. "Here is Oswald again," they exclaimed, "who went for a soldier years ago."

A crowd was soon collected round the wayfarer, who was kindly greeted by all his old friends and acquaintances, every one inquiring if he had come back to reside amongst them. To these inquiries Oswald announced that, tired of the life of a soldier, he had given up the military profession, and intended to remain for the rest of his days in the village of Goldenthal. Pleased with the intelligence, and desirous of gathering an account of our hero's life, a number of persons asked him to retire to a tavern with them for a little friendly chat; but this invitation he respectfully declined, and asked them by whom his father's house was now inhabited. The miller, who had taken care of the house and land left by Oswald's father to his son, now came forward and said that a few days only would be required to make the house ready for its new inmate, and, in the mean time, he should have pleasure of entertaining Oswald at the mill. This kind invitation was accepted, and, after spending a few days with the sensible and hospitable miller, the retired soldier took possession of his own house.

For some time Oswald was so busily engaged in making repairs and improvements on his premises, that he had no time to bestow on intercourse with his neighbors, whose amusements were anything but agreeable to him. In consequence of this neglect, the villagers began to cherish bad suspicions against the new settler, and to make remarks on his conduct. They said they could not understand the man—his foreign travel had made him churlish and unsocial—constantly toiling or reading, he did not seem to have a moment to spare for an occasional sip at the wine flask—a strange thing, indeed, for an old soldier not to take a glass.

Possessing naturally much good sense, which had been greatly improved by experience in the bustling life which he had led, and also some choice reading, Oswald posessed opinions on various subjects considerably different from those of his old village companions, whose proceedings were not at all to his mind. A yearning for the scenes of his infancy had brought him back to Goldenthal, which he loved with all its shortcomings and errors. It grieved him on looking through the village, and learning something of its history, to discover that it had been for some years declining in its prosperity, and was now in an exceedingly bad condition. Formerly it could boast of not a few respectable men in good circumstances, persons who could creditably take a lead in affairs; with a considerable number who, though not rich, were yet industrious, and removed above poverty. And what a difference now? Except the miller, the tavern-keepers, and two or three farmers, the people were generally worse than poor; for they were in debt. There was likewise a deterioration of manners, and things upon the whole looked desolate. Many of the houses were greatly in want of repair; rubbish lay in masses in different quarters; the gutters were far from cleanly, and sent up a pestiferous odor; while the insides of the houses were correspondingly mean and untidy. The clothes of the people, also, did not seem what they used to be; their universal shabbiness showing a want of self-respect. To complete the picture, men might be seen at all hours listlessly dozing away existence with pipes in their mouths instead of working at some useful occupation. All too truly told a tale of sloth and impoverishment. Oswald took the liberty of hinting at these symptoms of general decline; but he was only abused for his pains. It is a thankless task to remind people of their duties.

Distressed with all he had seen, Oswald betook himself one day to the house of the miller, who could sympathize with him in his feelings. "Pray, tell me, my friend," said he, "what has been the cause of this strange social degeneracy? When I departed from Goldenthal, it was a brisk little prosperous place; now it is all going to ruin. Surely it has not been scourged to a greater extent by war than its neighbors?"

"You are right," replied the miller; "our village has not suffered by war more than other villages which are flourishing. The causes of our decay are more continually at work, and I shall try to give you an insight into them. There has been gradually creeping over us a disposition to take easily. Two or three men, who are our parish officers, are tavern keepers, and they manage public business for their own benefit. The village common, which used to be of some consequence, is thus badly managed; in fact the funds were abused, and no little is spent in feasting and carousing. Still you would say, it must after all be people's own blame if they get poor; the mere robbery of some public revenues cannot do it. That is true. But, with a bad example before them, the bulk of the villagers become careless, imitate bad habits, and, in short spend a large share of their earnings in the taverns, and at cards and billiards. It is a curious thing I tell you, that few men are able to keep the small properties left them by their fathers and grandfathers. They first get them burdened with debt, and then they are compelled to sell them. It all comes from following low habits."

"When you have known all this," said Oswald, "why did you not expose it, so as to open the eyes of the people?"

"Because I had no hope of a good result," said the miller; "for, while all allow that we are in a deplorable case, and all will agree in general complaints and reproaches, none will thank you for attempting to discover the true causes of our decline, since every one fears lest he should have to bear some portion of the blame."

"What! is there neither conscience nor religion left in the place?" exclaimed Oswald—"what does the parson say to all this?"

"Oh, he preaches on his customary round of topics, but never enters particularly into the real circumstances of the people, nor makes any close and practical application of his doctrine to them. He is an old man, rather reserved and haughty in his manners. He seems to preach from habit, as the people go to church from habit, and come back no better. And the young are following the examples of their elders."

"Is your schoolmaster, then, good for nothing?" Oswald asked.

"Since your father died," said the miller, "our school has never prospered. The boys and girls learn, by compulsion, to read, write, and reckon a little, and perhaps to repeat a prayer besides; but then, what is this against all that they learn from their parents at home—deceit and lying, swearing, quarrelling, begging and stealing, idleness and intemperance, envy and slander?"

Oswald heard with pain all that the miller had to tell of the parish, then shook his head with a dejected air, and went away to meditate on the melancholy account.

II.

Oswald boldly attempts the reformation of Goldenthal, and encounters persecution.

On the next Sunday, after service, the people as is customary in Germany, were assembled under the large lime trees on the green. A weighty matter had drawn them together; for not only had they to consider how they should raise the taxes about to be levied, but also how they should make up old deficiences of payment. The head men of Goldenthal formed the inner circle, and around them stood the women and children to hear the result of the consultation.

Oswald, who had been waiting for an opportunity of addressing his fellow-villagers on the state of affairs, thought he might do so now with advantage, and joined the assembly. When the overseers and others had done speaking, he mounted a stone, and after craving leave to be heard, which was not refused, he spoke as follows:—

"Dear fellow-villagers! I went away a boy to the field of battle, and have returned to you a man. Scarcely can I recognize my native village: my heart is pained by the alterations I find among you. Once our village deserved, indeed the name of Goldenthal. You know that most of the people were once in good circumstances; few were poor, and none were beggars: we could lend money then to our neighbors, and had none of the anxieties and vexations of debtors; our land was well cultivated; our cottages were neat and clean, inside and outside. A Goldenthaler in those good days was a gentleman, and could have borrowed a hundred guilders on the bare credit of his word. That was the golden age of Goldenthal."

Here all the assembly nodded assent, and some exclaimed, "Oswald is right for once!"

Oswald went on—"'Tis not so now! The place should be no longer called the Golden Valley, but rather the valley of dirt and thorns and thistles. The blessing of heaven seems to have forsaken our fields; some have too much land, others have too little: the greater number of you do not improve what you have; you stupefy your senses with incessant smoking, or, what is worse, drinking; most of you are in debts and difficulties; and, being idle, you occupy yourselves in speaking evil of your neighbors. Our village has lost its good character, and is now known as one of the most intemperate and badly behaved places in the country, and when people wish to call any one a good-for-nothing wretch they say he is a Goldenthaler!"

At these plain words there was a muttering of displeasure among the crowd, and every brow looked threateningly on Oswald. Elizabeth the miller's daughter, who stood listening on the bench before the house, trembled for the perilous situation of the too faithful expositor. But he went on—"Men of Goldenthal! if there is still a drop of honorable blood in your veins, join your hands and say—'the village shall be mended!' Whence comes your ruin? From your taverns. There your land melts away in liquor, and your cattle lost in gambling. I ask your parish officers where is the public money, or where is your strict account of what you have done with it? Why is it that you had rather eat at the public cost than drain the parish land, or mend your neck-breaking roads?"

Here two or three of the official men called out—"Hold your tongue, you vagabond! If you thus go on speaking evil of the constituted authorities, we will send you to the lock-up, with bread and water for eight-and-forty hours!"

Oswald, however, went on—"You can put me in your prison no doubt; but I can also bring you before your superiors. And when I tell them a little of your management, you will perhaps be less comfortable than I could be with bread and water. But I turn to you all my fellow-villagers; show me if I have spoken falsely, or slandered any person. Ask your consciences whether you have not [illegible] ill, whether you have enriched or impoverished yourselves, whether you are notable for honesty and piety, or for indolence, fraud, and selfishness. Or, if your consciences have lost their tongues, look round you and behold your tumbling houses and sheds, your barren fields and gardens, your empty purses and chests, your ragged coats and tattered shirts, your destitute looking children—these are my witnesses against you!"

The preacher would have said more, but he was hurled from the stone by the angry crowd.—Some would have proceeded to violence; but Oswald thrust himself through the throng, and, having armed himself with a weighty cudgel, threatened severe punishment to the first who should dare to lay hands upon him. Loud outcries of vengeance pursued him homewards, and stones were hurled, one of which inflicted a wound upon his brow. But he reached his house without further injury, and there washed away the blood from his face, bound up the wound, and was soon composed and quiet. Elizabeth, pale and alarmed, came to inquire of his wound; but he assured her it was trifling, and bade her dismiss her fears.

So ended Oswald's first attempt at reformation; but he was not to be defeated. From the day on which he delivered his address, he continued to be the object of many petty persecutions. One night the boys threw stones at his windows; another night they barked six young fruit trees in his garden. When he complained to the parish officers of these offenses, they only told him he had brought ill-will upon himself, and that he deserved worse than he got.

Not daunted with want of success in his exhortation, and possessing the ardor of a man convinced of the truthfulness of his cause, he now determined on trying to rouse the clergyman to adopt his views. Perhaps, thought he, he requires a little coaxing; he has probably been disheartened without a proper reason. Oswald accordingly waited on the pastor, and as tenderly as possibly laid before him the condition of the parish, waxing bolder, however, as he proceeded.

Having stated what he considered his case the old man replied—"You are quite in a mistake in coming to me. I have nothing to do with the concerns you mention, nor can I mix myself up in your business. All the unhappiness of this village is owing to the sinfulness of the people. They disregard the word of God. They defraud me of my dues in every possible way. The long-suffering of Heaven cannot endure this much longer; and there must surely come a heavy judgment upon them."

"But, reverend sir," said Oswald, "you can do something towards the reformation of these people. Their lives are vicious, because their minds are dark and ignorant. If you would encourage a better regulation of the school, the young might grow up well-informed and with good habits, and we should doubtless reap good fruit from such a labor!"

The clergyman answered—"That is the schoolmaster's business, not mine; I have no time for it. I have enough to do to study my sermons."

Oswald still urged his petition—"Reverend sir, I am sorry to have to remind you, that, as a good shepherd, you are bound to care for every one of your flock. If you did but visit their abodes, and see how they have habituated themselves to vice, indolence, and misery; if you could see the neglected children who are growing up in the midst of so many bad examples; if you could ——"

Here the old clergyman, who had been listening impatiently to the harangue of his visitor, interrupted him by exclaiming, "This is intolerable. You, an unlettered man, come here to lecture me on my duties! Pray, what do you take me for? Do you think I am a police-officer, to be poking about everywhere? The flock should themselves attend to their temporal concern. I am a spiritual pastor, and know my place. Get along with you; and let me hear no more of such impertinence."

Oswald left the personage disappointed. Pretty nearly at his wits' end, he bethought him of taking counsel from the magistrates of the next town, who had a kind of supervisional authority over Goldenthal. Having arrayed himself in his best suit, and taken his walking-stick in his hand he set out for the neighboring town, where he expected to find good advisers and helpers. On his arrival he waited on the most respectable public characters to lay the condition of Goldenthal before them. But the first person he applied to was giving a great dinner, and could not attend to the miserable story. Another was just going to take a walk and could not stop. A third was deeply immersed in a game of billiards which required all his thoughts. A fourth was reckoning up his accounts, and had no time for any other business. A fifth was about to conduct a lady to the dancing room, and of course could not be interrupted. The sixth, an old gentleman with a white peruke and queue, sitting in an easy chair, looking patronizingly on Oswald without desiring him to be seated, he heard the story he had to tell of the misery of Goldenthal, the bad measures of the parish officers, and the ignorance of the schoolmaster—to all which he shook his head gravely.

Encouraged by the interest which he appeared to have excited, Oswald next spoke of the indifference of the parson; but here he struck a wrong chord. Looking sternly at his visiter, and his neatly-tied queue almost bristling with indignation, the old man called on him to stop his false accusations. "You ill-mannered rascal," said he, "do you imagine I can sit here to listen to your revilements of all authorities, spiritual as well as temporal? I suppose you are one of those discontented fault-finding wretches who are never at rest, but would turn everything topsy-turvy? Away with you and your catalogue of grievances, or I will send you to the house of correction. Your clergyman, so far from being what you represent him, is one of the best of men; for he is my own cousin!"

After this rebuff, Oswald had not the courage to apply elsewhere on the subject, and he returned sorrowfully to the village.

III.

A new Schoolmaster—Oswald's mode of teaching—the Sunday School—the occurrence at the mill.

On arriving at Goldenthal, in the afternoon, Oswald told no one of the bad result of his journey; but put on a cheerful face, and spoke in a friendly manner to those whom he met, even to his worst enemy, Brenzel, the host of the Lion, who was majestically standing with folded arms at the tavern-door.

"Good evening, neighbor, Brenzel," said Oswald; "you have soon done your day's work."

"I think I deserve my days wages at all events," said Brenzel, "if I stay at home only to drive the beggars from my door."

Oswald was disgusted as he heard this unfeeling speech from the man, and, without any further conversation, hastened, homewards.—He was cheered when, approaching the mill, he found Elizabeth, the daughter of Siegfried the miller, sitting in the shadow of the cherry tree, at the front of the house, and sewing. Though he endeavored to appear cheerful, she saw that he was sorrowful at heart, and earnestly questioned him of the cause of his grief. "You have been over to the town," said she, "and have seen what you like better than anything at Goldenthal, and now you will not be able to remain with us."

Then Oswald explained to her the cause of his sorrow. He did not mean to leave Goldenthal; but the deterioration of the place had grieved him deeply, and he could find none disposed to assist him in the work of reformation. As he spoke of the sad habits of the villagers, Elizabeth replied, "We have just had another instance. Our old schoolmaster, who, you know was a dissipated character, is drowned. Coming home tipsy from the Eagle, he fell into the pond by the road-side, and was found only after life was extinct. Happily, he has left neither wife nor child."

This news seemed to affect Oswald in no small degree. He became studious after hearing it, and went home full of thought. Elizabeth could not guess what great matter he was considering; but she discovered it the following Sunday. After service, the parishoners were called together to elect a new schoolmaster. Oswald attended the meeting. The miller, at the suggestion of his daughter Elizabeth, stood at the side of Oswald, ready to check him whenever his indignation was in danger of uttering itself too strongly.

The first of the parish authorities, Mr Brenzel opened the meeting by a speech. As the office of schoolmaster was vacant, and was one of the least important in the parish (for the salary was only forty guilders a year,) he was happy to recommend to the parish a suitable man, willing to fill the place. This was the tailor, Mr Specht, whose trade was very dull, and who was, moreover, related to him, the speaker, on the mother's side.

The host of the Eagle came forward to propose, as an amendment, that his poor cousin Schluck, a lame fiddler, should fill the office; for he was willing to do it, considering the poverty of the parish, for a salary of only thirty-five guilders a year. In weighing the qualifications of the candidates, he hoped it would be remembered that Mr Schluck had a large family. This, with the fact of the saving of five guilders would doubtless influence the votes of the parishioners.

Specht the tailor, as he saw that many of the voters were very much taken with this tempting offer, came forward to give the fiddler a very bad character, and, further, offered to perform all the duties of the office at a salary of only thirty guilders. At this the fiddler was so enraged, that he called the tailor by many most disgraceful names, and again offered himself at a reduced salary. Twenty-five guilders would be enough for him. The tailor, who could not go below this, declared he would call Schluck before the magistrate to answer for the libels he had uttered, and so gave up further competition.

The voters were accordingly prepared to install the fiddler in the office of schoolmaster, when Oswald stood forward and spoke—"What! will you give more for your cow-herd, and even to your swine-herd, than to the man to whom you would confide the instruction of your children in piety and useful knowledge? Are you not ashamed of such a sin! I know your parish purse is empty; and the poor people who can hardly gain potatoes and salt, let alone bread cannot afford to pay for schooling. I will make a third offer: I will be your schoolmaster, and demand no salary! It shall not cost the parish a farthing: only let me have the place." The Goldenthalers looked at each other in amazement. Some objected to the proposal: they did not know what such a man would teach the children; perhaps the black art! But the majority in the meeting considered chiefly the saving of twenty-five guilders yearly, and cried out that Oswald should by all means be the schoolmaster. Accordingly, he was elected.

Elizabeth heard the result of the meeting, and felt as if she must sink into the earth with shame and confusion. No wonder; for, next to the watchmen and the swine-herd, no man in the village held an office so low in estimation as that of the schoolmaster. Even the sensible miller, Siegfried, shook his head, and said, "Oswald must have lost his senses!" But Oswald had formed his plan, and kept to his determination. He formally passed an examination; and as he could write a good hand, and knew something more of accounts than a peasant needed, he was considered eligible, and appointed by the authorities of the neighboring town, schoolmaster at Goldenthal. But now he had to convince his friends of the propriety of his plan. "Elizabeth said he, do not despair of my undertaking, nor count it a folly. You see we can do little for the old people; let us begin with the young ones, and try what we can do with them. A village schoolmaster's is indeed a despised office; but our religion teaches us to remember how low the Savior stooped to teach mankind. If our rulers and great men had a better understanding, they would be more careful about the appointment of country schoolmasters than of the professors in our colleges. But lowly matters are too much neglected: and the consequence is, the [illegible] and upon an insecure foundation."

Having formed his resolution, Oswald was not the man to shrink from what he considered his duty. It was no doubt a thankless task he was undertaking; but it is no true benevolence which looks about for thanks. Conscious that he was doing good to the best of his ability, he felt that his reward would consist in seeing his ends accomplished. With no fear of the result, he made preparations for commencing the profession of teacher, and when winter came on, he opened his school. On the first day, he placed himself at the door of the school-house, and received the children with kind attention. Some had muddy shoes, and he bade them clean them before they entered the decent school-room. He shook hands with all who came in cleanly style, but turned away the dirty hands to be washed. Some came with hair uncombed and matted, and were sent home to use comb and brush. But all who came combed and washed, received from their new teacher a kiss on the brow. The boys and girls wondered: some blushed, some laughed, and others cried. They had never known such treatment before. Many parents complained of these over nice regulations; but Oswald insisted on them, and in the course of a little time found a good result in the decency of his pupils. The reformation he produced in the [illegible] of a quarter, by mild and firm management, amazed the parents. Some of the old women broadly hinted that such wonders could not be done by fair means; there must be some magic at work. Others told a strange story of a rat-catcher somewhere, who enticed many children to follow him, and then vanished with them all down a hole in the mountain. But the most prevalent report was, that Oswald was teaching the children a new religion; and this was so seriously believed, that two official gentlemen from the town were deputed to inspect the school.

The badly disposed villagers were delighted to hear of this commission of inspection, and waited with anxiety to hear that Oswald was to be dismissed. The commission came unexpectedly one morning when Oswald was about to open his school; but the appearance of the gentlemen by no means discomposed him, for he had nothing to conceal. The visiters, after explaining their object, watched the children as they assembled and took their seats in an orderly manner. When all were seated, Oswald as usual, addressed his pupils.

"Dear children," said he, "let us, before all things, bow before God our father, and offer our thanksgivings and prayers." As he spoke, the children in number fifty-five, folded their hands and fell upon their knees. Oswald then knelt down, and the visitors, a little surprised, followed his example. The teacher then read a prayer, beautiful, and yet so simple, that the child of only six years could understand it; and one of the visitors, an alderman, was so far moved that tears gathered in his eyes. When the prayer was ended, all the children arose, and, guided by the notes and words on a suspended board, sang in harmony a morning hymn. Then the school divided itself into classes, under the appointed monitors, and the various tasks of the day were studied. One peculiar method of teaching used by Oswald should be mentioned. The last hour in the afternoon he generally occupied by telling the boys and girls an amusing story, in which some useful lesson was contained. The visitors saw enough of his methods during the day, to be convinced that Oswald was one of the best and worthiest teachers in the country, and that all that was said against him was a scandal.

The winter passed away. In the summer the school was closed, for the elder boys and girls could then be of service to their parents in the fields. But Oswald collected the little ones at his house, and gave them a few lessons, or amused them in some light occupations about his premises. It was part of his convictions that instruction in anything without actual training is of little use. He therefore tried to train his pupils to industrial pursuits, and so lead them to a practical acquaintance with what they read of in books. In this way he taught them gardening and a knowledge of plants, also various other things which would be useful to them through life. A great point with Oswald was to form habits of order and cleanliness in his young scholars, and this not only at school, but when out of doors, enforcing his rules with persuasions suited to young minds. Perhaps, however, all this was held by him of inferior moment to the education of the feelings—a love of the beautiful, the tender and the poetical—for without these the mind remains hard and intractable, and cannot be led to know the finer religious emotions. How charming was it to see this benevolent man with his band of scholars, happy in each other, neither sourness nor severity in the master, nor fear in the pupils. It was throughout a labor of love; addressed as their dear master, Oswald was always ready to encourage and explain. No one dreaded to ask him a question. He was their friend not less than their instructor. The happiness in these young parties drew the attention of the elder scholars, and they begged Oswald not to forget them. He accordingly arranged that they should at times visit his house, or walk with him in the fields. On these occasions he opened their understandings to many branches of knowledge—among others, the wonders of creation and providence, and the nature of human society, of which they had formerly known ve-